

# Tanker Explosion Kills Mother, Grandchild In Abeokuta

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ABEOKUTA

A mother and her granddaughter, whose identities were not recognised, Sunday morning, burnt beyond recognition as a fuel-laden tanker exploded at Lafenwa Market in Abeokuta, the Ogun State capital.

The tragedy struck when the tanker loaded with premium motor spirit (PMS), popularly called petrol, fell at a failed portion at the rail line along the Lafenwa-Ojurin-Ayetoro Road in the state capital.

It was gathered that the tanker fell while the driver was trying to negotiate the bad portion of the road, but had its axle broken, fell and started spilling its contents.

*Daily Independent* gathered

varying reports as witnesses disagree with security operatives and fire service officials on when the incident occurred.

While the security operatives said the accident happened about 4:45a.m, an official of Ogun State Fire Service said it was about 2a.m, while another eyewitness said it was some minutes after 1a.m.

*Daily Independent* gathered that the incident was well managed until hoodlums invaded the scene to scoop fuel and in the process clashed with operatives who had been drafted to restrict movement.

The angry touts, it was gathered, deliberately ignited the fire which led to the explosion, when they were stopped from scooping the fuel by the operatives.

It was gathered that the police had to shoot two of the hoodlums in the cause of controlling the situation.

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Several shops and properties worth millions of naira were burnt to ashes while the hoodlums took advantage of the development to loot other several shops.

Five of fire service men were beaten by the hoodlums while attempting to put out the fire while their vehicles were also destroyed by the mob who pelted them with stones.

The Public Relations Officer, Ogun State Traffic Compliance and Enforcement Corps, Babatunde Akinbiyi, while confirming the incident lamented that some residents went to the scene, scooping fuel and engaged in other unwholesome acts, "which regrettably sparked off the fire which engulfed the whole area."

Akinbiyi said, "Two lives were lost in the unfortunate inferno, that of a grandmother and grandchild, while property worth millions of naira were

also destroyed."

He explained that the corpses had been deposited at the morgue of the General Hospital, Ijaiye, Abeokuta.

Akinbiyi said the mob vandalised two patrol vans belonging to TRACE Divisional Command, Abeokuta, and two heavy duty vehicles belonging to the Federal and State Fire Services, while some personnel of TRACE and Fire Service were also assaulted during the rescue operation.

When *Daily Independent* visited the scene of the incident, the remains of a mother and her child was seen already burnt beyond recognition.

Angered by the development, touts were seen hauling stones and shattering wind screens of law enforcers who were trying to cordon off the accident scene.

The Operational Commander of the Fire Service, Ogun

State, who simply identified himself as Ilesanmi, who spoke with newsmen at the scene, said the service received emergency call about 8a.m that a tanker fell.

Ilesanmi said he immediately deployed his men to the scene, but they were prevented by hoodlums.

"I was at the scene, it is not that someone told. I came with my private vehicle, so their plans is to be in my in front. It was because I was not on my uniform. If not, they would have even attacked me also."

When told that they might have been attacked because they arrived late to the scene, Ilesanmi said, "The Fire Service did not come late, the reason is this, anytime there are issues like these, they will like to vandalise may be the shops and so on.

"That's their target. Their target is not to complement

our effort. Five of my officers, including the driver and all vehicle windscreens have been vandalised."

The Director, Ogun State Emergency Management Agency, Ige Olufolarin, spoke with newsmen at the scene, noting that the fire service men left for the place from Ogere where there was another accident.

Olufolarin also confirmed the attack, lamenting that the officials were hindered by hoodlums.

An eyewitness, Saburi Agbabiaka, said the incident happened about 1a.m while he was taking a passenger to Rounder along the area.

He said, "But around 6a.m when I got here, I saw that the security personnel have taken over everywhere. In just few minutes, I observed that the fire later became uncontrollable and it even killed a mother and her child.

"What I observed was that those boys got angry because a lot of things were damaged."

When contacted the Police Public Relations Officer in the state, DSP Abimbola Oyeyemi, said five suspects were arrested.

Oyeyemi said the police had cordoned off the area to avoid loss of lives but the hoodlums sabotaged the situation, accusing the hoodlums of igniting the fire from the market which engulfed the whole area.

He said, "Five suspects have been arrested. When the tanker fell, the police and other agencies had cordoned off the place, but, the area boys started scooping the fuel.

"They broke windscreen of operational vehicles of the fire service and DPO Ilupeju. We even suspect they were the ones that ignited the fire that engulfed the whole area.

"Five of them have been arrested, they would be charged to court".

armed squad personnel in a